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Sir
Reg^d. Mohun,
Bart.

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Some Account of the Life and
Adventures of
Sir Reg^d. Mohun, Bt.

Done in Verse by
GEORGE JOHN CAYLEY.

Canto First.



LONDON:
WILLIAM PICKERING.
1849.

TO
THE HON. HENRY COKE,
This Canto
IS INSCRIBED, BY
HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,
THE AUTHOR.

PRINTED BY CHARLES WHITTINGHAM, CHISWICK.

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3



INTRODUCTION.

I.



READERS of rhyme!—for rhyme still has its
readers,

1

Although the age of Poetry be past ;
At least this age's literary feeders
Who in poetic prose their Epics cast
Declare so ; having tried it, I suppose,
And found their verses flounder and stick fast :
(I for my part less fortunate than those
Can never get along at all in prose)—

II.

- 9 Readers of rhyme ! I beg you won't believe
A word of what these Epic prosers say :
They all begin with rhyme ; and when they leave
A hopeless Hippocrene, because their lay
Alas ! was unsuccessful, (though sublime)
They deem that Poesy has lost her sway ;
And rhyming against reason in their time,
Are now content to reason against rhyme.

III.

- 17 As long as men have ears—short ears or long—
They will be tickled with a rhyming jingle :
The barbarous soul is satisfied with song
Whose melodies with little meaning mingle :
Then, as the Age arises from its slumber,
(As a last dream in waking minds will tingle)
Comes forth the first great Poet. Then a number
Of followers leave much literary lumber.

Introduction.

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IV.

He cuts his phrases in the sapling grain
Of language ; and so weaves them at his will.
They, from his wickerwork, extract with pain
The wands now warped and stiffened ; which but ill
Bend to their secondhand employment. Next,
Fastidious persons waste a deal of skill
In striving to avoid each author's text ;
By which their muse is cramped and sore perplexed.

25

V.

Whatever you, or I, or any one
Thinks, says, or does, was thought, said, done of yore ;
For there is nothing new beneath the sun :
(An adage staled by every common bore :)
Yet every day is new : for every day,
Though all its incidents were known before,
Grouping these incidents another way,
By novel combination keeps us gay ;—

33

VI.

- 41 Or, if not gay, at least still keeps us going;
Which answers pretty well till we are gone.
And thus a lay with verses easy flowing,
Though they have little in them, we read on :
But if an author takes to writing fine—
(Which means I think an artificial tone)—
The public sicken, and won't read a line.
I hope there's nothing of this sort in mine.

VII.

- 49 " One touch of nature makes the whole world kin :"
There is such innate likeness in mankind
That they can read each other's nature in
Their own;—though of themselves but judges blind.
E'en those we only know by what they print
Cannot in type disguise their secret mind :
We know the genuine coin of Nature's mint
The heart ;—and whether it be flesh or flint.

Introduction.

7

VIII.

Nature has come to be in fashion lately :

57

Heavens ! how we do pervert the sense of words !

Our language is deteriorating greatly ;—

Sweet milk to nauseous whey and stodgy curds.

This stanza is obscure—but pray abate your

Impatience, and reflect. The case affords

Occasion gravely with yourselves to state your

Ideas of Fashion patronizing Nature.

IX.

Language is the employment of the tongue—

65

And by the tongue at first was used alone :

Till alphabets, those torments of the young,

And of all speech corrupters, became known.

Then, as men spoke, they wrote and spelt at random :—

Now we learn speech from books : and words have grown

To such distorted shapes ; that those who planned 'em

I question if they now could understand 'em.

X.

73 The age is rushing into print : and I,
By force of circumstance, must write a book.
I shall be happy if the Public buy ;
And sorry if alas ! they overlook.
I shall be deeply grateful to reviews,
Whether they deign approval, or rebuke,
For any hints they deem may disabuse
Delusions of my inexperienced Muse.

XI.

81 I mean, unless cut short in my endeavour
By your disfavour, or my own disgust,
Or by some new idea which seems more clever,
(For Time *will* sometimes make old projects rust)
Still, if no circumstances should prevent, I
Expect, or, (to be humbler) "hope and trust"
To find in course of years provision plenty
For Cantos twelve, or may be four and twenty.

Introduction.

9

XII.

This will take time ; and Time may bring discretion :

89

The stream may deepen as it flows along ;
Still on its face reflecting Life's impression
In gay narration, or didactic song ;—
First, from its marish sources rippling free,
Where full blown weeds the wasteful margin throng,
It may roll on by hamlet, town, and lea,
Until its calm broad bosom meets the sea.

XIII.

The reader won't of course expect at first

97

Much plot or incident. An introduction
Is mostly of society the worst
Sample, as well as of each new production :
To which one always feels a great distaste,
Until drawn into it by gradual suction.
Our scepticism never is in haste
On objects new its sympathies to waste.

XIV.

- 105 Therefore I shall not hurry into action ;
Nor try to force my hero down your throats ;
For previous eulogy ensures detraction,
When persons find that, on comparing notes,
The author's wondrous paragon of praise is,
Judging by specimens the author quotes,
An utterer of most ordinary phrases ;
When we expected eloquence in blazes.

XV.

- 113 I don't myself believe in heroes greatly ;—
Not having met with any in society :—
A mixture of the affable and stately,
Of brilliant wit untinged by impropriety,
Of dignity unvarnished by assumption,
Convivial spirit tempered with sobriety,
True virtue without want of worldly gumption,—
Such gathered lustres never in the lump shone.

Introduction.

11

XVI.

To do too little, and require too much
Is the prevailing error of mankind :
Cripples—they scorn to hobble on a crutch,
And dog-direction spurn—being beggars blind :—
Their high Ideal, in disappointment's blight,
Like mildew'd fruit corrupts from core to rind ;
And they hash up their views of wrong and right
As fashion does her views of day and night.

121

XVII.

But though there are no heroes—there are men ;
None perfect, but approximations vary :
We meet egregious persons now and then
Who may be called the cream of Nature's dairy ;—
Others sour butter-milk. The world keeps turning,
Along the milky way so cool and airy,
Like a huge churn : the butter of whose churning
May be much future piety and learning.

129

XVIII.

- 137 Yet some, despising Life's legitimate aim,
Instead of butter would become "the cheese :"
A low term for distinction—whence the name
I know not—Gents invented it—and these
Gave not an etymology : I see no
Likelier than this, which with their taste agrees—
The *Caseine* element I conceive to mean no
Less than the beau ideal of the Casino.

XIX.

- 145 But I must stop ; my Introduction grows
Itself an Epic. But I have to say
One word before I bring it to a close.
I mean to be *sincere* in this my lay.
That which I think I shall write down ; without
A drop of paint or varnish.—Therefore, pray,
Whatever I may chance to rhyme about
Read it without the shadow of a doubt.

Introduction.

13

xx.

There is more truth in what men think and feel
Than aught they can imagine or pretend.
Our national manner's vice is to conceal
All feeling ;—which destroys it in the end.
A wretched, mean, dissimulative dread
Of ridicule, dividing friend from friend,
Cramping whate'er is thought, or done, or said,
Shuts up the heart—which might as well be dead.

153



CANTO I.

I.

1



N our good land of England—for whate'er
 Æconomists and paltry politicians,
 To suit some theoretic definitions,
 May otherwise calumniously declare,—
 Despite of Panic and Potato dearth,
 Our land *is* good—yea, fairest upon Earth :
 Unquenched by showers and fog and dampness, there
 Sweet Freedom breathes her most congenial air :—

Sir Reginald Hobun.

15

II.

Despite those patching, pottering pedagogues

9

In politics, the Whigs—despite of Tory

Defection—we are still a realm of glory :

Our Commerce may be going to the dogs ;

Our Manufactures rot for want of sale ;

Yet still we slay our beeves and brew our ale :

Still tinker-botched, and driven by dolts or rogues,

Our lumbering Constitution onward jogs :—

III.

All is comparative.—The Continent

17

(As all true patriots must with rapture see)

Is in a much more piteous plight than we :

There reigns the mob ! yet is not more content :

Her Emperors, Kings, Princes, Potentates,

Proprietors, their Realms and their Estates

Relinquishing, upon their travels went ;

Nor have yet heard of revenue or rent :—

IV.

- 25 Still Queen Victoria sits upon the throne ;
Our aristocracy still keep alive ;
And on the whole may still be said to thrive :
Though now and then with ducal acres groan
The honoured tables of the auctioneer.
Natheless our Aristocracy is dear,
Though their estates go cheap ; and all must own
That they still give society its tone :—

V.

- 33 In our good land of England, there are yet
Some stalwart stems, whose sap of ancient blood
Still pulses fresh in the untainted wood :
Hale “family trees” in swardy park-land set,
Whom neither blast hath torn, nor axe hath lopped,
Nor mushroom mill their feeding water stopped ;—
Still are there stately mansions *not* “to let”
Of noble lord and worthy baronet.

VI.

Our Baronets of late, appear to be

41

**Unjustly snubbed and talked and written down ;
Partly from follies of Sir Something Brown
Stickling for badges due to their degree ;
And partly that their honour's late editions
Have been much swelled with Surgeons & Physicians :
For "honour hath small skill in surgery,"—
And skill in surgery small honour. We**

VII.

Intend to set this right ; and, to that end,

49

**Shall from the Baronetcy's roll select
Our hero ; whose high deeds and stage effect
Must make his order in the scale ascend.
The copious leaves of Burke shall bud anew
With of distinguished matters not a few :
Which, if our Public kind its ear may lend,
We now will in veracious verse perpend.**

VIII.

- 57 Sir Reginald Mohun—for thus the name
Is sounded, (and we hope it suits your ear)—
Was handsome—young—and had an income clear
Of Twenty thousand Pounds. The line goes lame
With such a load of bullion on its back ;—
Yet, fancy them all jingling in a sack !
Peep in ! Ah ! dimpling discs of mellow flame
Our hearts yearn towards you ! nor are much to blame.

IX.

- 65 Such is of devils poor the greedy lust !
Which those who never felt the griping fang
Of penury, nor knew privation's pang,
Conceive not, nor have in their minds discussed.
It seems extremely simple to their eye
To have or get whatever gold can buy :—
Being, alike, by longings vain non-plussed—
For things which are not bought with golden dust.

X.

Have you a heart? Gold is the thing to harden it:—

73

Gold, which so long has held a *sovereign* sway,
(The pun was unintentional, therefore pardon it)

Seems likely to have almost had its day:—

A Californian glut may soon upset all

Our ancient worship of the idol's ray:—

Still it must always be a useful metal;

Appropriate for a warming-pan or kettle.

XI.

What shall we choose?—Value must find a standard;—

81

Bank-notes wont do without convertibility;—

Unless by bullionists they're greatly slandered:—

The test of value now will be utility;

All real worth will readier markets find:

Those who *produce* will meet with more civility;

Consumers, whose fixed revenues have pined,

Will cavil at the change as most unkind.

XII.

- 89 The landed interest, now scarce worth a button,
 Producing that whereby mankind are fed,
 Shall issue notes for corn and beef and mutton :—
 Coin at first represented Kine,* 'tis said :—
 Why should it not again ?—The ancient chaff
 Of “ What’s a pound ? ” would fall extremely dead
 From great Sir Robert,—nor would raise a laugh—
 If it were changed to “ What’s a golden Calf ? ”

XIII.

- 97 This by the way.—Sir Reginald Mohun,
 The worthy scion of an ancient race,
 For many ages lords of Nornyth Place,
 Sate on the terrace-coping about noon
 Beside a granite urn, on which he leant ;—
 And looking on his house with some content
 Beat time with swinging heel, and hummed a tune ;
 And hoped his friends would leave their couches soon.

* Pecus—pecunia.

XIV.

In truth a very noble stately hall

105

Was Nornyth Place :—with time-worn turret grey,
And shadowy quoin, and deeply mullioned bay ;—
Athwart whose lantern lattice, on the wall
Streamed all rich hues, imbued by tinted pane
Lighting the interior : while each gilded vane,
From pinnacle and graded gable tall,
Blazed on the broken sky line over all.

XV.

It stood upon a gently rising hill,

113

Bosomed in wood, and yet not over-grown, [stone—
Through which long winding glades—with statued
Rude offspring of the sculptor's hasty skill—
Led down to the broad mirror of a mere ;
In tremulous lines along whose margin clear
Grew down its dark-stemmed sylvan peristyle ;—
Save where leapt o'er the rocks a laughing rill,

XVI.

- 121 Which o'er the ripples, widening in their wane,
Sent forth its little isles of floating foam—
Tossed like light sea-birds on their ocean home.
Beyond these woods there spread a plenteous plain
Motley and shadow-streaked, of various hue :
Thence far away uprose the mountains blue.
This from the terrace :—but description's vain—
I leave the landscape to each reader's brain.

XVII.

- 129 Meanwhile our worthy baronet (of whom
I gave not yet a portraiture complete,
Because 'twill be developed in the suite)
Had left his terrace for the breakfast-room :—
There he found several guests who came belated
O'er-night—for whose descent erewhile he waited—
Five college friends—who came, as we presume,
Part of their long vacation to consume.

XVIII.

The long vacation, although hailed with glee
 By youth, which wearies still and hopes anew,
 Brings a perplexing case of what to do :—
 Some to the London season's revelry—
 Some with a reading party to secluded
 Places in Wales or Scotland, where deluded
 Parents suppose they read ;—less credulous we
 Believe they fish,—shoot rooks with rifle-pea—

137

XIX.

Smoke many pipes—drink many quarts of beer—
 Yawn many weary yawns o'er problems few,—
 And in the evenings play at whist or loo.
 Their tutor fallen in love is not severe :
 He met at church—ah ! ruinous disaster !
 The bright-eyed daughter of the village pastor :
 O'er Ovid's page, beside the streamlet clear,
 He dims his spectacles with fruitless tear.

145

xx.

- 153 Some to a hurried continental tour—
Ostend, Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp, and the Rhine,
Aix la Chapelle, then Paris—that divine
City of manners gay and morals pure—
Would I were there!—but ah! I had forgot:
Perhaps upon the whole I'd rather not.
This hasty couplet's rashness premature
Has quashed our royal "*we's*" investiture.

xxi.

- 161 Some to Spain, Norway, Switzerland repair
For Bullfights, salmon, chamois; and a few
Their high romantic scenery may woo;
But nature's votaries in youth are rare:
Yet most the merry season's charms allure
Till August's Ides resound upon the moor.
Thither they swarm, large patterned tweeds to wear
And breathe on heathery brows more wholesome air.

XXII.

Wise were the augurers of old, nor erred
 In substance, deeming that the life of man
 (This is a new reflection—spik and span—)
 May be much influenced by the flight of bird !
 Our Senate can no longer hold their house
 When culminates the evil star of grouse ;
 And stoutest Patriots will their shot belts gird
 When first o'er stubblefield hath partridge whirred.

169

XXIII.

Alas ! for my defect of disposition,
 Or education, or perhaps of both,
 I must confess, (though much ashamed, and loath
 To do so, dreading the world's dire derision)
 Far from its merits as a sport disputing,
 I really have no taste at all for shooting.—
 In youth I tried it, but my young ambition
 Was damped by turnip tops ;—which are perdition.

177

XXIV.

- 185 I hate long walks ; a double barrelled gun
Is heavy ; and another bore immense is
Having to get through stiff and prickly fences :—
Lunch—like oasis in the waste—is one
Redeeming point: game pie washed down with sherry
Under a tree, when tired, is pleasant very :—
Also a cheerful pipe, when these are done,
Weaving its light blue tangles in the sun.

XXV.

- 193 Meanwhile much coffee, eggs, chops, steaks, and ham,
And jellied pie, and such materials light
Demolished with a wholesome appetite
Our breakfast party :—hungry sons of Cam
Were they :—but as their appetites relaxed—
So did their tongues ; and conversation waxed
Extremely, as they paused o'er rolls and jam,
Or marmalade. But, first of all, I am

XXVI.

Bound to inform you of their names, and make
Excuses for the lateness of their meal.
St. Oun, De Lacy, Wilton, Tancarville,
(Whose previous adventures we will take
For granted) had from various tracks united
At Vivian's: there Mohun, too, was invited,
But having sundry reasons which would break
My narrative, he went not for their sake.

201**XXVII.**

Now Vivian Manor being not remote
From Nornyth; when their double barrels five
Had rather scared the game yet left alive,
These friends, of slaughter yet unsated, wrote
Acceding to what Reginald suggested
Touching his partridges, yet scarce molested;
And chose for equipage by unanimous vote
Two tandems—things on which hot youth will dote.

209

XXVIII.

- 217 Vain were good Lady Vivian's strong entreaties
Against this desperate system of conveyance :
They seemed to yield, but left it in abeyance ;
And went next morning early. Sad, yet sweet, is
Such disregard of wiser heads' advice !
The day was fine—and though one leader twice
Came round the shafts, with nose almost to meet his
Driver,—the present-minded Wilton beat his

XXIX.

- 225 Head with the whip's butt end, (because the lash
Of course was tangled) and by timely aid
Of grooms he through the archway egress made.
The road once gained, they went along full slash,
Hastening to overtake the other trap,
Which durst not pause for fear of like mishap,
Driven by De Lacy.—Never striplings rash
Left stable yard more likely for a smash.

xxx.

Yet are these perils after all o'errated.

293

They tossed for turns in driving : and the road
In three eighteen mile stages they bestowed :
They broke a trace, which some delay created ;
And not arriving ere the close of day,
Mid devious darkness missed the proper way :—
Yet came not to great grief—but, as I stated
Some stanzas back, they somewhat were belated.

xxxi.

The night was cold and cloudy as they topped

241

A moorland slope and met the bitter blast,
So cutting that their ears it almost cropped ;
And rain began to fall extremely fast.
A broken sign-post left them in great doubt
About two roads ; and when an hour was passed
They learned their error from a lucid lout :
Soon after, one by one, their lamps went out.

XXXII.

- 249 “ Hope springs eternal in the human breast,”
And every earthly ill must have an end :
Yet Hope herself will sometimes feel distressed
Upon strange roads when lights celestial lend
No ray to show lost travellers where they are :
When supperless thoughts their inward vitals rend,
And erring wheels will over stone-heaps jar—
Curs'd stoneheaps meant to mend the roads they mar !

XXXIII.

- 257 The echoing archway of the Lodge at length
Yawned to receive them—yawned the Porter too,
And gave them a horn lantern, by the strength
Of whose dim glow, they passed the avenue
Of huge old lumbering oaks without collision ;
The jaded horses now more lively grew ;
As if of oats and hay they had some vision,
Or felt their drivers drove with more decision.

Sir Reginald Mohun.

31

xxxiv.

Sir Reginald had given them up, and worn

265

His patience out with fancies manifold—

Still fruitless, that their wheels in distance rolled :

Yet lingered on 'till the first hour of morn

Sounded its lonely melancholy stroke :

Then rose and gave the fire a parting poke—

When struck his ear the sound of winded horn

And wheel, and cries of “ wo ! ” though not forlorn.

xxxv.

He hastened down. But the old butler Jones,

273

Who in the pantry vigilantly dozed,

Already had the entrance door unclosed—

And in they rushed with greeting's various tones,

And gathered round the blazing entrance stove,

Huge plaids unwound—doffed surcoat, cap and glove :

“ Supper, which once was warm, is cold as stones—

But we ourselves can grill some devilled bones.”

XXXVI.

- 281 So spake their host, and speaking led the way
To the oak dining room, whose board lay spread,
In case they came requiring to be fed,
With much cold aliment; on which straight ways they
Fell to. Their host slicing in sundry members
A turkey to be grilled upon the embers—
Cut, peppered, buttered, salted, slashed away;
While Jones brought various liquors on a tray—

XXXVII.

- 289 A gridiron, too, upon whose silver bars
Spluttered and fizzed the turkey's limbs disjointed;
While the rich unguents which those limbs anointed
Dripped flaming on the coals like falling stars:
Also a kettle from its brazen body
Yielded bright vaporous streams for whisky toddy.
I need not dwell on these particulars,
But grieve to add they ended with cigars.

XXXVIII.

Smoking, the prominent vice of modern days,
 Though justly censured as a "stinking vice"
 By Chesterfield, whose nose and *nous* were nice;
 Yet is not altogether without praise.
 Tobacco has dried up the floods of port,
 Which our forefathers swallow'd by the quart;
 And other bad propensities allays;
 For which my modest muse this tribute pays.

297

XXXIX.

Yet smoking is a vice:—and if again
 I had to thread the "slippery paths of youth"
 (Alas I write this stanza pipe in mouth)
 I might from such ill practices abstain.
 Smoke not, ingenuous youth! but if you do,
 I recommend clay pipes and honey-dew.*
 Yet, let me tell you, smoking is a drain
 Upon the system, and destroys the brain.

305

* Honey-dew Cavendish is the strongest and best tobacco.

XL.

- 313 The reader will conceive that, with the aid
Of whisky and cigars, and much detail
Of novel incident and story stale,
The hour of rest was very much delayed ;
From which, and late exposure to night airs,
They one by one fell back in their arm-chairs.
“ ’Tis nearly four, Mohun,” De Lacy said :
They waked their snoring friends—and went to bed.

XLI.

- 321 “ How very long at breakfast we have been !
The dogs and keepers loiter in the court :
We dine at seven : for days are getting short—
Time wears apace—Up ! up ! my sportsmen keen ! ”
So up they rose, and buckled on the straps
Of belt and flask ; with wads and copper caps
Storing their fobs : twin tubes of twisted sheen
Glanced on their shoulders purple, brown, and green.

XLII.

St. Oun said—"As not feeling quite *in case*,
 Nor in the mood for slaughtering beast or bird,"
 (Or some such periphrase) "that he preferred
 To stay at home, and prowl about the place :
 He was not here before, and wished to make
 Acquaintance with the house and grounds, and lake :
 He hoped they would not think his conduct base—
 To-day he really could not go the pace."

329

XLIII.

"Of lazy dogs the laziest ever Fate
 Set on two useless legs, you surely are,
 And born beneath some wayward sauntering star
 To sit for ever swinging on a gate
 And laugh at wiser people going through."
 So spake the bard De Lacy ; for they two
 In frequent skirmishes of fierce debate
 Would bicker, though their mutual love was great.

337

XLIV.

345 “ St. Oun, ho ! to the rescue ! (cried Mohun)
These poets bully one another still
As much as ever : but I see no ill
In our good Saint’s proposal : and, as soon
As I have fired a shot or two, to start
The day’s good-luck, we will in peace depart
To view old Nornyth’s lions. As a boon,
Till then, we crave thy company, St. Oun.

XLV.

353 “ Our three first fields will bring us to the wood
Which skirts the boat-house corner of the mere :
There we may sail awhile, and you shall steer—
Unless you deem such toil to be, too rude—
See ! Flora points—Good bitch ! come on !” then soared
The crashing covey—Then the barrels roared :
Mohun’s discharge cut short in their career
A brace—Some others were not so severe.

Sir Reginald Mohun.

37

XLVI.

“ A noble right and left, Sir Reginald,” said
Old Oswald ; who, with justifiable pride,
The execution of his master eyed.
He was a true retainer ; born and bred
On the estate ; and came into possession
Of the headkeepership by due succession
Through sire and grandsire ; who when one was dead,
Left his right heir male keeper in his stead.

361

XLVII.

His pride was not unmingled with regret :
And when two other similar exploitures
Had brought them to the aforesaid wood’s enclosures,
He said “ He leastways could not help but fret
To see a noble gentleman which shot
So beautiful, should never care (as what
Seemed now a days) to touch a gun ;—and yet
His match to shoot was seldom to be met.”

369

XLVIII.

377 This to St. Oun in mournful confidence :
Which proving his host cared not much to shoot,
Thus caused his scruples to be less acute ;
Likewise his deprecations less intense,
When Reginald came his weapon to resign
To Oswald ; whom, perceiving to repine
At such defection and indifference,
He then assured that, upon no pretence,

XLIX.

385 He on the next occasion would omit
Such wholesale slaughter as should much redound
To credit of both keeper, game, and hound.
Which consolation, having duly hit
His grief, he grimly smiled and touched his hat,
Saying, “ he made no kind o’ doubt o’ that :—
For when his worship was but in the fit,
He always said, and still would stand to it,

Sir Reginald Mohun.

39

L.

“ No gentleman in England, or elsewhere,
Could *lie* a gun on truer, or put in
A sharper second barrel—” But his twin
Audience, conceiving that this theme might bear
A rather tedious crop of eloquence,
Bade him good day ; and through the thicket thence
Emerged upon a pathway ; here and there
Embellished with a bench or rustic chair.

393

LI.

It wound along a rugged shadowy dell,
Beside a fretful rivulet : now leaping
In foam adown the root-bound crags—now sleeping
In lazy pools, black watered as a well.
So on they slowly sauntered, arm in arm :
Such link in love or friendship has its charm ;
I know not why, but yet there is a spell,
Where some magnetic influence seems to dwell,

401

LII.

409 Which weaves the mutual arm of friend with friend,
And tunes the harmonious footstep's sympathy
Of motion. Once, long since, we did agree
(I and a friend affectioned much) to wend
Our way unharnessed thus, because the weather
Was sultry. Seven times we linked together
Unconscious elbows, and six times did rend
Asunder, but were vanquished in the end.

LIII.

417 This pathway brought them to the water's marge.
Plank-built and pitchy, in its little bay
Mid drooping boughs embowered, the boathouse lay.
There funny, four-oar, sailing-boat, and barge
Slept side by side. Then by great hue and cry
They roused from out his hut, which stood hard by,
The rough old tar, who had the boats in charge;
And begged he would the Nautilus enlarge.

LIV.

“Ay! ay! sir,” answered Ben, and, waddling, brought
Sails, tiller, cordage, pulleys, and much more,
Whose names would puzzle folk that live ashore :
Which, having duly tackled and hauled taut,
He punted to the floating pier or raft
(Where they got in) the lovely little craft—
Light as a seagull—swift as poet’s thought :
This simile, however, goes for nought—

425

LV.

For poets’ thoughts are sometimes very slow ;
Some seagulls, too, upon the wing are heavy :
Yet on the Atlantic once I saw a bevy
Hover around our wake, which struck me so
For grace, that I exclaimed, in ecstasy,
“ The poetry of motion is to fly : ”
Which, said of dancing, then, I did not know ;
And the discovery gave my muse a blow.

433

LVI.

441 Swelled her light canvass in the gentle breeze,
And o'er the ripples leapt her gilded prow ;
(I'm not quite sure it is not called the bow,
Read then, aquatic reader, which you please)
Snorted the stately swans in proud disdain
Of such intruder on their fair domain ;
Retreating sideways with high ruffled fleece
To their green isles of shelter and of peace.

LVII.

449 From the bright waters of the winding mere
They watched the turret-groups that did appear
Still changing as they ploughed their zigzag lines
Of wake. St. Oun, who, with but slight capacity
For patient thought, had gifts of great loquacity,
(Not that he wanted wit, but that his mines
Of careless intellect were rashly tossed
Up in rough ore, with rubbish much bedrossed,)

LVIII.

Expanded largely on the varied views ;

457

And said, " Now, really, if I had to choose
From all the places I have ever seen
One for myself, (which is not very probable,
Such places not being beg-able or rob-able,)
Yet, if that useful Jinn of Aal-ed-dèen
(True Arabic for mispronounced Aladdin)
Who when the lamp was rubbed, forever had in

LIX.

" Immediate readiness (like Mr. Robins,

465

Save that the Jinn demanded no outfobbings)
A palace, or a splendid country-seat—
Were to have offered me a choice selection
Of mansions for my critical inspection,—
Versailles is handsome—Chatsworth snug and neat—
Blenheim and Burleigh decent—Newstead Abbey
Is picturesque, but desolate and shabby—

LX.

- 473 “ Before all these, and many more beside—
Nornyth should be the palace of my pride.
I am a pauper without settlement,
Though able, short of absolute distress,
To eat the fancy-bread of idleness :
Ambitious—just enough for discontent
With sloth obscure ; yet lacking zeal to tame
The harsh obstructions in the way to fame.

LXI.

- 481 “ I sometimes wonder how it would have done
To be some prince, or duke, or eldest son
On whom life showered her gifts in great profusion :
’Twere now a pleasant change ; yet if I had
Been born to it, it might have been as bad
As any other practical delusion :
For, after all, the best approach towards joy
Is in the chase for things, which, tasted, cloy.

LXII.

“ So if I had the objects, which I now
 Must want, or win with perspiration's brow,
 They would but be a means of earlier surfeit,
 Or of more pampered petulance ; which less
 Could brook some slight deficiency's distress.
 The tomb, whether stone build it, or grass turf it,
 Soon opes its swardy lips or “ marble jaw”
 To gulp us down to Earth's remorseless maw.

489

LXIII.

“ ‘Pallida mors,’ at palace door and hovel,
 Knocks with impartial shaft of sexton's shovel.
 ‘More Life, not Death, we want,’ says Alfred Tennyson :
 But what *is* Life? Some take Bell's Life in London ;
 Some take a Life Insurance, as a fund on
 Which to leave widows ; staking present pennies on
 Prospect of posthumous pounds. What's life? a riddle,
 Or sieve, which sifts you through it in the middle.

497

LXIV.

505 "What are Life's baubles worth, then? not a pin!
And yet I wish that I had lots of "tin;"
For then I would do whatsoever came
Into my head; and go wherever chance
Or fancy led me, in a whirling dance
Through vast vagaries. What is hard-earned fame
To youth and wealth? With these I would not quarrel
Or toil for fusty bits of withered laurel.

LXV.

513 "Yet fame is sweet; and men as they grow old
Grow greedier of it, as they do of gold.
What are your views of life, my grave Mohun?
You have a modestly sufficient share
Of all the gifts which mortals reckon rare;
Born with what nurses call a silver spoon;
And yet I can't perceive that Life to you
Appears to wear a much more brilliant hue.

LXVI.

“You know *my* history, which once I told,
 If you remember, in the days of old,
 One Sunday as we strayed Cam’s marge along ;
 Sauntering beneath the breezy willows cool
 Upon our way to bathe in Byron’s pool :—
 Then was our recent friendship fresh and young,
 With all the fragrant blossom which the heart
 In youth will shower around its counterpart.

521

LXVII.

“Ah happy days ! Yet so we thought not then ;
 Having our grievances like other men :
 But that these fade from memory, and leave
 The more enduring tints of joy behind,
 Is a strong proof that if the fretful mind
 Did not exorbitant desires conceive—
 Whose standard still depreciates the Present—
 Life’s actualities would seem quite pleasant.

529

LXVIII.

537 "But, as I said, you know my history ;
 And yours—not that you made a mystery
 Of it, nor used reserve—yet being not
 By nature an Autophonophilete,*
 (A word De Lacy fashioned and called me it)—
 Yours, you have never told me yet :—and what
 Could be a more appropriate occasion
 Than this true epic opening for relation :—

LXIX.

545 "*The sun from his meridian heights declining
 Mirrored his richest tints upon the shining
 Bosom of a lake. In a light shallop two
 Young men whose dress, etcetera, proclaims
 Etcetera—*So would write G. P. R. James—
*"Glided in silence o'er the waters blue,
 Skirting the wooded slopes. Upward they gazed
 On Norrnyth's ancient pile, whose windows blazed*

* Lover of his own voice, Egotist.

LXX.

*" In sunset rays, whose crimson fulgence streamed
Athwart the flood:—wrapped in deep thought they seemed.
" You are pensive, Reginald," at length thus spake
The helmsman : " Ha ! it is the mystic power
Fraught by the sacred stillness of the hour :—
Forgive me if your reverie I break ;
Craving with friendship's sympathy to share
Your bosom's burden—be it joy or care."*

558

LXXI.

*" Nay, rather your forgiveness I should ask,
Raymond, for such abstraction—' Twere a task
Tedious perchance even to friendship's ear
To hearken ;—for my musings were in truth
A tissue of the memories of my youth ;—
Remembrances, which, though to me most dear,
To you must prove insipid."—" Nay, proceed
Dear Reginald :—my heart were cold indeed*

561

LXXII.

569 “ *If such a theme could fail to interest
All its et cætera.*” Thus politely pressed,
The hero tips up all his little annals :—
Which—having a dislike to such narrations—
The courteous reader skips in his impatience,
And rushing rashly into chartless channels
Of incident, their thread of course he loses,
And the author’s perspicuity abuses.

LXXIII.

577 “ But as you have no audience save me,
Which is a pity,—for simplicity
Of Truth beats all the studied arts of fiction
For interest ;—perpend, discourse, and tell,
While yet the sunbeams on the waters dwell ;
And I will sit and listen to your diction.”
“ Well ! it shall be due penance for your sins
Awhile to hold your tongue :—so here begins :—

LXXIV.

“ Know, Raymond de St. Oun, that I was born
 In Naples :—there, while yet a new born thing,
 Death o’er my cradle waved his darksome wing.
 My mother died to give me birth ;—forlorn
 I came into the world—a babe of woe—
 Ill omened from my childhood’s early morn ;
 Yet heir to what the idolaters of show
 Deem Life’s good things, which earthly bliss bestow.

585

LXXV.

“ The riches of the heart they call a dream ;—
 Love, Hope, Faith, Friendship—hollow phantasies :
 Living but for their pockets and their eyes
 They stifle in their breasts the purer beam
 Of sunshine, glanced from Heaven upon their clay,
 To be its light and warmth. This is a theme
 For homilies ; and I will only say—
 The heart feeds not on fortune’s baubles gay.

593

LXXVI.

601 “ I had a sister. There was but a year
Between our ages : and although she died
When I was five years old, yet through the tide
Of Time, still rolling o’er the Past, the dear
Light of her memory, as a gem of power
Piercing from sunlit depths, uprises clear—
All beauty and all gentleness ;—whose flower
Of love might make a virgin angel’s dower.

LXXVII.

609 “ Some poet writes, ‘ Not even in dreams may we
Revisit childhood ;’ but it is not so :
For every moment, as the ceaseless flow
Of change wears on, traces indelibly
Its picture :—as the mirror of Daguerre,
Receiving sun-wrought shadows, seems to be
Untinged, until the likeness lurking there
Comes out when clouded by mercurial air :—

LXXVIII.

“ So on the mirror of the mind—whose face
 Reflects Life’s incident—each passing, leaves
 Some subtile vestige. All thought the soul conceives,
 However transient, with undying trace
 Remains : though not to be recalled at will
 While a disturbing present overlays
 Its delicate limning : But when dreams distil
 Limpid abstraction—then the invisible

617

LXXIX.

“ And the remote expand to life again—
 Fresh in all circumstance. For instance, though
 I have forgot the Italian, (which you know
 Was my first tongue) with her it seems as plain
 And natural, in my dreams, with fluent phrase
 To use it ; as when by the Ausonian main
 We wandered gathering shells in winding bays—
 Where Ocean’s kiss earth’s sun-scorched lips allays.

625

LXXX.

- 633 “ I see her often in my dreams ; and feel
As then I felt—our little arms around
Each other's waist, in close affection bound,
Prattling soft Southern cadences. A seal
Is set on years since vanished—These, confused
Into a dim foreboding, sometimes steal
O'er the sweet vision : then, as if accused
By the sad Future, all with shame suffused

LXXXI.

- 641 “ I blush before those heavenly innocent eyes,
And cower beneath a burden of blind sin
And woe to come—unseen, but shadowed in
Their sorrowful gaze. And when I wake, arise
Upon the disc of conscience, traced anew,
Black records of past folly ;—its disguise
Of sophistry sloughed off : and griefs, which grew
Dull in forgetfulness, revive their hue.

LXXXII.

“ My father was a melancholy man—
 Having a touch of genius, and a heart ;
 But not much of that worldly better part
 Called force of character ; which finds some plan
 For getting over anguish that will crush
 Weak hearts of stronger feeling. He began
 To pine—was pale—and had a hectic flush
 At times—and from his eyelids tears would gush.

649

LXXXIII.

“ Some law of hearts afflicted seems to bind
 A spell by which the scenes of grief grow dear :—
 He never could leave Italy : though here
 And there he wandered with unquiet mind :—
 Rome, Florence, Mantua, Milan ; once as far
 As Venice ;—but still Naples had a blind
 Attraction which still drew him thither. There
 He died.—Heaven rest his ashes from their care.

657

LXXXIV.

665 “ He wrote a month or so before he died
To Wilton’s father (He is Earl of Eure,
My mother’s brother—) saying, he was sure
That he should soon be gone ; and would confide
Us to his guardian care. My uncle came
Before his death. We stood by his bed side :—
He blessed us :—we, who scarcely knew the name
Of Death, yet read, in the expiring flame

LXXXV.

673 “ Of his sunk eyes, some awful mystery ;
And wept we knew not why. There was a grace
Of radiant, joyful hope upon his face
Most unaccustomed ; and which seemed to be
All foreign to his wasted frame ; and yet
So heavenly in its consolation, we
Smiled through the tears with which our lids were wet.
His lips were cold, as whispering, ‘ Do not fret

LXXXVI.

“ When I am gone :’ he kissed us—and he took
 Our uncle’s hands, which on our heads he laid,
 And said ‘ My children, do not be afraid
 Of Death ; but be prepared to meet him. Look !
 Here is your mother’s brother :—he to her—
 As Reginald to Eve :’—His thin voice shook—
 ‘ Eve was your mother’s name.’—His words did err
 As dreaming, and his wan lips ceased to stir.

681

LXXXVII.

“ We saw him laid by her whom, living, more
 Than Life he loved : (their tale has much romance
 Which I may tell some other time perchance :)
 Then, with Lord Eure, towards ‘ Albion’s seagirt shore’
 We journeyed. Cities, mountains, forests, towers
 Crowd on my memory. We travelled post,
 Nor stopped except for necessary hours
 Of food and rest. Leaving the land of flowers

689

LXXXVIII.

- 697 “ And fruits, our native Italy, we crossed
The gleaming Alps : ’twas winter :—all was snow
From skylost summit to the vales below ;—
And glacier peaks seemed sharpened in the frost.
We scoured through France swiftly, ‘ a la milor,’
And from the cliffs of Calais saw the coast
Of England raise its high white bulwarks o’er
The chafing channel’s dark and wintry roar.

LXXXIX.

- 705 “ We dwelt at Wilton : my poor sister there—
Like a transplanted flower from sunnier climes—
Faded and fell. Thus was I left betimes
Alone. I was too young for much despair :
And yet I felt my loneliness, among
A troop of happier children. Though with care
Tended, and never by unkindness stung—
My heart knew not the gladness of the young.

XC.

“ Wilton and I are nearly of an age :

713

We had our early battles ; and have been
 Friends and companions through each changing scene.
 Our names appear together on a page
 Of the Eton and the Cambridge registrations :—
 Yet life's increasing length of pilgrimage
 But widens more and more our occupations
 And tastes. So much for similar educations.

XCI.

“ His mind—still centred on the Present—yearned

721

For constant action. With a headlong course—
 Too rapid for reflection, or remorse—
 He dashed into the whirl of Life ; and earned
 Experience piecemeal. I, upon the brink
 Of newly entered being, early learned—
 What sorrow teaches older hearts—to think :
 And marked the mire where heedless footsteps sink.

XCII.

- 729 “ Thought—an unwary sentinel to guard
From sin’s surprise—is a sharp skirmisher
To harry her retreat. And those who err
Against their hoodwinked reason find, when scarred
With traces of Temptation’s galling spur,
Such after thoughts hit conscience very hard :
And sad remembrance helps them to demur
A little—when like instances recur.

XCIII.

- 737 “ But what is this? A dubious compromise—
Twilight of cloudy zones—whereon the blaze
Of sunshine breaks but seldom, with its rays
Of heavenly hope, towards which the spirit sighs
Its aspirations, and is lost again
Mid doubts :—to grasp the wisdom of the skies
Too feeble—though convinced earth’s bonds are vain,
Cowering faint hearted in the festering chain.

XCIV.

“ I think you must be tired :—and there I hear
 Their guns. They are returning on the right :
 There—put about—they soon will be in sight :
 Ah ! there they go again : and sounded near.”
 “ I see them,” cried St. Oun, “ Hollo !—Hollo !”
 He shouted—and the woodlands echoed clear—
 “ How—many—head ?”—Came o’er the tide a low
 And distant voice—“ I—really—do—not—know.”

745

XCV.

This useful answer was De Lacy’s. He
 Was, at the moment, striving to infix
 On Vivian’s mind some point of politics :
 While Vivian was intent to let him see
 Exactly how, just now, he shot a bird
 Skimming above a wall beneath a tree.
 The poet, always ready with a word,
 Answered at random when the shout he heard.

753

XCVI.

- 761 Wilton and Tancarville brought up the rear.
The first, as usual, from a darksome clay
Clouding with "birds' eye"* fumes the face of day.
They stood beside the margin of the mere
Till the keel grated on the pebbly strand :—
And then because 'twas six o'clock, or near,
To dress for dinner they moved homeward : and
The Nautilus two under keepers manned.

XCVII.

- 769 They said " Oh ! what a gentleman to talk
Is that there Lacy ! what a tongue he've got !
But Mr. Vivian *is* a pretty shot.
And what a pace his lordship wish to walk !
Which Mr. Tancarville, he seemed quite beat ;
But he's a pleasant gentleman.—Good lawk,
How he do make me laugh !—dang ! this 'ere seat
Have wet my smalls slap through—dang ! what a treat !"

* A sort of Tobacco.

xcviii.

“ There’s company coming to the ‘ Place ’ to morn :
 Bess housemaid told me : Lord and Lady—dash
 My wigs ! I can’t think on. But there’s a mash
 O’ comp’ny and fine ladies—fit to torn
 The heads of these young chaps. Why now I’d lay
 This here gun to an empty powder horn,
 Sir Reginald be in love,—or that-a-way :—
 He looks a little downcast loikish—Eh ? ”

777

xcix.

But we will leave these moralists, without
 Deciding their debate : and make an end
 Of this first Canto. And it will depend
 On circumstances—yet involved in doubt—
 Whether I publish it at once ; or wait
 And make my little volume look more stout :—
 Adding a second canto to create
 A deeper interest in the hero’s fate.

785

c.

- 793 Of critics I shall take, or ask advice—
Whether this specimen will do to try
The public taste, and catch the public eye:—
And if they think one canto may suffice
(Although my next would be much more sublime)
I'll pitch this headlong in to break the ice :
For if you don't appreciate my rhyme
Another Canto were but waste of time.
- 801 If this be good—the world will find it out :
If it be bad—they will not take it in ;—
Nor will it take them in. I do not doubt
The average justice of the popular din ;—
Which, when a natural impulse gives it birth,
Utters harmonious dissonance—(akin
To Truth's celestial symphony)—on earth
The truest human test of human worth.

END OF FIRST CANTO.

